

THE 10 BIGGEST CAREER CHANGE MISTAKES TO AVOID



Did you know that the average person will make a career change approximately **5 to 7 times** during their working life?

Why is this?

Here are the most common reasons behind a career change ...

- ✓ Boredom or a lack of fulfilment and passion in what you do
- ✓ What's important to you has now changed as you find yourself at a different stage in your life
- ✓ With more life experience behind you, you have become more emotionally and self-aware, and now seek something that is a better fit and more aligned with who you are
- ✓ You just don't like the people you work with or the business circles you move in
- ✓ There are so many more different career choices available out there

For some of you, you might be able to relate to all of the above, as I certainly could!



This is my **fourth** career change since starting out in my career almost two decades ago as a fresh-faced, starry eyed lawyer who was about to get the rudest awakening of her life when she came to the awful realisation one day that what she had studied and worked hard for over most of her life was not what she wanted to do anymore!

Since that time, I have gone through multiple transformations and tried on different hats as I have *personally* and *professionally* grown and laid the stepping stones to get me to where I am today.

Through my own experiences of teaching and being taught, and observing others, I discovered the fundamental Do's and Don'ts of making a successful career change. As a former recruiter and head-hunter for over 15 years, this is what I lived and breathed every day!

I don't want you to do what I saw others do countless times resulting in wasted hours, pent up frustration and stress, and missed opportunities.



So here's what **NOT** to do when making a career change.

YOUR TOP 10 BIGGEST CAREER CHANGE MISTAKES TO AVOID!



1. The Knee-Jerk Reaction (Going 'From' Rather Than 'To')

When you are unhappy, stressed, anxious, angry, nervous, upset, disappointed and hurt, it can be easy to look at everything around you through these emotional filters, and make decisions and take action based on a negative state of mind.

“My boss treats me like crap”, “I am not valued for my contributions”, “I feel so unfulfilled”, “I hate what I do”, “I’m desperately unhappy”.

When you get caught up in this cycle of negative thinking, often the first thing you want to do is stick your finger up at the company you work for and either quit or take the first opportunity that comes your way. Or you might be so miserable that anything would be better than staying where you are.



So here's my advice. Take a breath (or a few!), remove yourself temporarily to a place which is not associated with that environment, and get some clarity around your thinking. Don't let your emotions influence your decision-making. Because when you do, you make knee-jerk decisions which I guarantee you will regret later. You make a decision based on running away **FROM** a perceived problem rather than focusing on what the SOLUTION is. Then all you will see are the obstacles and challenges rather than opening up your mind to ways of getting **TO** where you want to be.



Because when you shift your focus, what happens then is that your emotions start to shift with you into something positive and supportive of your desired outcome, and your actions will follow suit thereby creating your desired outcome!



2. Not Thinking Long-Term

Every move you make will impact the next and the next, and so on and so forth. Particularly as a job seeker, when your resume comes under scrutiny, and it appears that you have jumped randomly from role to role, or your average length of tenure is less than 12 months, you are giving your prospective employer the impression that you lack direction, loyalty, drive and commitment. That you have no idea what you want to do or that you aren't skilled enough at what you do to hold down a job for a reasonable period of time.



Be strategic. Have a plan. If you don't have the qualifications or skills to land your dream job or career straight away, then look at opportunities which you can use as stepping stones to get you there.

Set yourself short, medium and long term career targets or goals. By this, I mean **6 month**, **1**, **2**, **5** and **10** year targets. And then create a strategy to achieve each of these targets.

Every move you make should be deliberate and calculated, be part of a long term plan and supportive of your BIGGER PICTURE.

3. Giving In To Your Fears and Staying Within Your Comfort Zone

Fear of failure. Fear of the unknown. Fear of change. Fear of rejection.

You are often your own worst enemy. When you let your fears get the better of you, and call the shots, it's what we call self-sabotage! The problem is that when you live your life in fear, your outcomes will reflect that. Fear holds you back. It stops you from achieving. It tells you not to venture outside your comfort zone. Fear can be paralyzing resulting in not doing.

Our fears can often be long-held and deeply ingrained, often going back to our childhood. We might do our best to repress them however like trying to hold a ball under water, they only come straight back up to the surface again!



To help you remove your fears and any barriers or blockages to your success, you will need to get to the root cause of them. Figure out what is the source of them and ask yourself these questions –

- ✓ *How long have you had it?*
- ✓ *What happened the first time you had it?*
- ✓ *What purpose does it serve to have this fear or resistance in your life? What positive learning can you preserve from it?*
- ✓ *Why did you choose to have this fear or resistance?*
- ✓ *What is the benefit of holding on to it? What is the benefit of letting it go? Which outweighs the other?*



Once you are able to face your fears, and understand them, then you are in a stronger position to overcome and release them.

And when you do that, you will have the confidence to move outside your comfort zone and this is where the MAGIC happens and the opportunities open up!

4. Giving Up Too Easily

If only making a successful career change was like flipping a switch to turn on the light but it's not! It doesn't happen overnight. It takes time, planning, some tweaking and patience. More than that, it takes perseverance and determination. A **100%** commitment through the ups and downs.



Because you will encounter challenges along the way that will test you mentally and emotionally. However that's part of the journey and the learning.

If Thomas Edison gave up after his first failed attempt at inventing the light bulb, would we have electric power today? Probably. But someone else would have likely invented it and that's the point. If you give up, the only loser will be you. Because I guarantee you, someone else will step into your place and take the opportunity that you want.

Like me, a career change may require you to go through various transformations, putting up with criticism and doubt from others around you, multiple rejections, and road blocks that you never saw coming. However if you want it badly enough and have the focus, perseverance and determination to match, then your odds of success will suddenly increase exponentially.

Because as they say - you've got to be in it, to win it!



5. Using Money As A Primary Motivator



“Money makes the world go around”! Or hang on – should that be happiness??

Unless you are the Dalai Lama, I am sure that most of us would love a career that comes with a substantial pay cheque to finance a comfortable and independent lifestyle. There’s nothing wrong with having money as a motivator, however when it is your PRIMARY or SOLE motivator, that’s when you start to run into trouble.

Money does not buy you happiness. If the only reason that you choose a particular career path is for the earning potential, and you end up hating it, then you are just trading that money for your health and happiness.

I’ve always been a firm believer that when you are passionate about something and truly believe in yourself and what you are doing, and you embrace the learning and do what it takes to be a success, then the money will come.

Having said that, I appreciate that we do not live in a vacuum and that we need money to keep a roof over our head and to provide the basic necessities in life, so it is sensible to have a sound financial plan or backing before making a career change, as you may not be able to replicate your income in your new role within the short to medium term. Having the funds to support your transition is important particularly if you don’t know how long it may take to make the transition as the average career change can take 6 months up to a year to happen.



6. Changing Careers Because You Hate Your Job

Do not confuse disliking your job with disliking your career.

Running away will not solve your problems as you will just carry your baggage with you to the next job. Take a step back, detach yourself, assume an objective perspective and ask yourself - *what are the reasons for disliking your job? Is it something that is inherent to that particular environment (eg the people) that could be rectified working in the same profession but with a different employer, or is it the skills and work you dislike? Have your values (what is important to you) now shifted so that they no longer align with what you do and what you may represent professionally?*



So, for example, if what you are doing supports your Purpose in life and you are passionate about it, but you don't like a particular person you work with, then it may be that a job change could be the better route for you to take, rather than a complete career change.

The essential question to ask yourself is this – **is the source of my unhappiness able to be resolved by staying within the same profession or career by working for someone else or on my own, or can it only be overcome by seeking out a new career?**

7. Not Knowing Your Own Value

ASSETS

GAPS

HARD SKILLS

SOFT SKILLS



If I were to ask you right now the following –

- ✓ *what can you offer me as a prospective employer or client, and*
- ✓ *what is your value and your unique selling proposition*

- would you know?

During my recruitment and head-hunting days, 99% of the job seekers who I assisted were not able to answer this because they either did not know, or they did not have the confidence to articulate it. And then they might wonder why they have been unsuccessful in finding the job that they want.

So, what do I mean about **VALUE**? Your value is your special and unique skills set. It encompasses what you might know as your strengths as well as your hard skills (eg technical expertise) and your soft skills (eg interpersonal skills). It also includes your list of achievements, accomplishments, wins and successes which provide the evidence of your value.

By knowing your value, you are in a stronger position to not only identify the right opportunities for you (and not waste time on those which are not, as remember that TIME IS MONEY) but you will also know your market value which is critical when negotiating your salary or setting your price point if you are running your own business.

This also flows throughout the entire job-hunting process from preparing your resume and at the interview stage. If you don't know what you have to offer, then why would your prospective employer know this too, and therefore why would they hire you?

Likewise if you are a business owner. If you are not clear about what your value is and what you can offer me as a prospective client, why would I take up your products or services?



8. Not Doing Your Research

How well do you know your chosen career field or the market you want to work in?

For example, do you know what opportunities are available, what businesses are already out there promoting the services or products you are interested in, and what you have to do to either find the job you want or set up your dream business?

The more you understand and know your target market, the stronger a position you will be in to enable you to identify what specific opportunities are available out there, and what you have to do to find the job that you want or set up your dream business.



By doing very little background work and due diligence, or not doing it all, you are going in blind and it could very well end up being a case of “*out of the frying pan and into the fire*”!

9. Jumping straight to the end of the career change process without first addressing the fundamentals

This is one of the most common and biggest mistakes that a career changer can make. Particularly when you might be so unhappy, jaded, frustrated and upset, that all you want to do is start scouring the job boards straight away to look for that longed for escape.

DON'T! Because unless you are absolutely crystal clear on what it is that you would like to do, having put in the time and effort to figure this out beforehand, then all you are doing is wasting your precious time and adding stress and heart-ache on top of what you are already experiencing. It's like trying to put the roof on a house you are building before you have even laid the concrete foundation!



Go back to basics and address the fundamentals. For example, *do you know WHY you do what you do, and WHAT it is that you are passionate about?* This is what is called identifying your Purpose and Passion in life. Once you know this, you be able to begin building your framework for creating the career and consequently the life that you want and deserve.

Without this, you will continue to jump from role to role without any sense of purpose, direction, focus or meaning.

If you have no idea what your Purpose is, let alone your Passion, don't be discouraged as the majority of people I have encountered over the years have been in a similar position.

To discover your Purpose, start off by asking yourself the following questions –

- ✓ **What gives you a sense of fulfilment and meaning?**
- ✓ **What would you like to be remembered for in your life? What would you like your legacy to be?**



Your Passion flows from your Purpose so to find out what your Passion is, ask yourself what it is that you LOVE to do (and not just what you might be interested in)? Other questions to ask are -

- ✓ **Think back to when you were a child. What did you want to do when you grew up?**
- ✓ **If failure or money was no object, what would you spend much of your time doing?**
- ✓ **What gets you excited, fired up and out of bed in the morning?**

10. Doing It On Your Own



If you are one of the lucky few, you might fall into your dream career by chance or by accident. However, how long are you prepared to wait for this to happen, if it might happen at all?

Chances are that you are reading this because you have either tried to do this on your own unsuccessfully or you are contemplating it but have no idea where to start or are fearful of beginning the journey.

Consider how many others before you have completed the same or similar journey successfully. Why would you reinvent the wheel and potentially make the same mistakes as they did?

Be smart and learn from their experiences. They have done most of the learning for you so take advantage of this. Save yourself the countless wasted hours and your precious emotions.

That's exactly what I did.



Because remember that every moment that passes by, someone else out there is living and breathing your dream job and lifestyle and making the most of the opportunity that YOU have always wanted.

Seek out the assistance of the relevant experts who can fast track you to get you to where you want to be.

And surround yourself with people who will be supportive, and uplift and inspire you.

Life is too short to procrastinate and to live ruled by your fears and doubts.



So that's it. Your 10 biggest career change mistakes to avoid and what you can do about it!

I hope that you have found the information that I have shared to be helpful and useful. Take it and apply it straight away and I promise you that you will start to see *immediate* positive changes and results. Having the right mind set and following this through with behaviour and actions that reflect and support this is the key to finding your dream career.

And if you need my help along the way, you know where to find me.

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To your CAREER CHANGE SUCCESS!

All my best

Mimi

Career Change Specialist and Life Change Coach

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